1: Jenness--92 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 428, 764

"A portion of the property is always laid on the owner's grave; the rest is divided among his kinsfolk, the children receiving most or all of it. The distribution is decided after a peaceful discussion, the elder children, as far as I am aware, having no priority of claim. Implements and utensils of value that may be left on the grave are often recovered in after years by one or other of the survivors, when time has effaced the memory of their misfortune. In the fall of 1915 Kanneyuk found a small lamp lying on the ground, evidently deposited on a woman's grave. No one knew for certain whose grave it was, though there were several conjectures; but as we needed a lamp at the time, Higilak told the girl to bring it in to camp."

1: Jenness--174-176 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 764

"It so happened that I never witnessed the actual death and burial of a Copper Eskimo. The natives of Bathurst inlet and farther east leave the corpse inside the hut or tent and abandon the camp immediately. In 1913 two white men, Radford and Street, were killed close to one of the small islands in Bathurst inlet; thereafter the natives avoided this side of the island and camped instead on the opposite side, fearing the white men's shades that still lingered round their death place.(1) In the Coppermine region and in Dolphin and Union strait the Eskimos also leave the body inside the tent in summer and move on to another camping ground. In winter, however, they lay the corpse out in the snow, and build a wind-break of snow-blocks around it to protect it from the weather. Usually it is conveyed to the land a few days later and deposited on the beach above highwater mark, though sometimes it is simply left neglected on the ice. The relatives remain in their dwellings and mourn the day after the funeral, then resume their ordinary occupations and try to forget their loss. Probably certain taboos are observed, but my enquiries on the subject failed to yield any information.

Some or all of the dead man's implements are broken and laid on the ground beside him for his use in the future life. The man is dead, the natives say, and wants to have

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"1. Report of the Bathurst Inlet Patrol, Ottawa, 1917."

his implements dead also. Should he die outside his tent the survivors build a wind-break of stones and sods around his corpse to keep it warm, like the wind-break of snow in winter. In the summer of 1915 we found an old camp site in south-west Victoria island where a woman had died many years before. The tent had disappeared through the ravages of time, but its broken poles were still lying on the ground. Near them was the woman's knife, a hunter's bone pin for fastening the reticulum of the caribou when filled with blood, a needle case and the toggle of a woman's belt. I would have taken two of the tent sticks to use for fuel, but my companions protested that the dead woman needed them to keep her warm.

In a few places stone cairns are found protecting the corpse from the ravages of birds and animals. Captain Bernard unearthed human bones and a few implements from some cairns on Bell island in south-west Victoria island, where he noticed also the ruins of houses built of wood and sods. Mr. Stefansson discovered other cairns at Cape Parry and in Langton bay.(2) Dr. Anderson tells me that he never saw or heard of them farther west than this, logs of driftwood taking their place; he considered Langton bay as their western limit. The Copper Eskimos, as far as I could learn,

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"2. Anthrop. Papers, A. M. N. H., Vol. XIV, pt. I, p. 212, etc."

never cover their dead, so these [175] stone cairns are probably the relics of that earlier tribe that peopled the coast from Baillie island to Dolphin and Union strait. The six 'stone graves' that Mr. Stefansson noticed between Clouston bay and the Colville hills were almost certainly meat-caches, hundreds of which are scattered about the hills and valleys of this region.(1)

The only recent burial we saw was that of one Puivlik Eskimo, Haviron, who died in April 1915, after an illness that had lasted all the winter. His body was conveyed to the mainland near Cape Lambert and deposited on the shore just above high-water mark. Mr. Wilkins, the photographer of the expedition, examined the body a month or so later and furnished me with the following description. 'The corpse was on a point about twenty-five yards from the water and three or four feet above high-water mark. The coast hereabouts was a mass of broken rocks and an occasional boulder. The corpse was placed on the rocks, but no rocks had been placed on or around it. It was lying on its left side with the head towards the east, the right arm doubled across the chest, the left stretched along the body slightly to its front. It was dressed in a simple suit of inner deerskin clothes, attigi (i. e., coat), pants, socks, and mittens, and had on a pair of sealskin slippers. The right eye was open, the left closed, and

"1. Anthrop. Papers, A. M. N. H., Vol. XIV, pt. I, p. 301."

the mouth closed. The corpse was loosely wrapped in two deerskins, and its head rested on a pair of folded outer pants. An outer amigi was noticed a few feet [176] away, presumably blown there by the wind. About twelve feet to the south (inland) and parallel to the body had been placed the following articles: --

One fish-hook attached to a small stick, 6 inches long, by a short length of braided sinew.

One brass seal-spear head.

One pair of scissors (made of bone, tin-lined).

One battered lard-pail.

One pair of outer boots.

One broken bow without string or sinew lashing.

Two arrows with bone heads; in good order.

One bone-handled iron-bladed knife (snow knife).

One worn-out whittling knife, with a bone handle and an iron blade.

The most interesting of the ancient graves was one discovered near Bernard harbour by some western Eskimos who were serving the expedition. There were no bones, but they brought me a fishing rod, a woman's knife with an iron blade, a drill with an iron point, a marrow-spatula, two horn points and pieces of the shafts of a child's arrows, and two skewers for pinning up the blood-bag. The local Eskimos did not know whose

grave it was; they thought a whole family must have been laid there, for while the arrow-shafts suggested a boy, the knife indicated a woman and the drill a man. Some of the natives protested against our removing the objects, but suggested that if we really wanted them we ought to leave their equivalent on the grave. Following their advice, therefore, we deposited a cartridge for the use of the man, some needles for the woman, and a small trinket for the boy."

"The body is laced up in a skin, as a rule the deceased's own platform skin, but if it is a very skilful hunter it must be a new and unused skin. The body is clad in its under dress, i. e. inner jacket, under trousers, stockings, and the small outer shoes-- the latter, however, must have soles of caribou skin, never of seal skin.

The body is taken out of the house through a hole in the rear wall above the platform, although the hole may be made in the front wall near the passage. But first it must always lie inside the house three days if it is a man, and four days if a woman. These are the days when the death taboo is observed: nagte'nEq. The corpse is clad in its death clothes immediately after death by one of the nearest relations. During nagte·nEq the body is laid outermost on the snow platform in the house. nagte·jut: those who are holding the death taboo, may go hunting during the nagte·nEq itself. If a seal is caught it may even be brought into the house of death, where it can be flensed and eaten.

During nagte·neq, knives and ulos are laid up on the platform beside the inhabitants while they sleep at night. If the death taboo is being observed during the period when the people are living in tents, the body must always be carried out from kilo: the rear part of the tent, as in the snow hut. Later on, when the taboo is over, the corpse is carried on a skin to the place where it is to be laid within a circle of stones; this is called ilofra. The ilofra is selected a good distance from the village so that there is no prospect of the dogs' eating the body, although this often happens. In winter the body is driven on a sledge to where it is to be laid, and when no stones are available, a small house of snow

is built over it.

The body must be placed so that the face turns towards the rising sun. A small opening is cut above the head to leave room for the soul to get out.

Nothing definite can be said as to what happens to the soul after death, though they believe that it leaves the body after it has been buried. Possibly it often returns to the grave, and for that reason offerings must be made there.

The one who lays a corpse in the ilofra must cover his face with the flap of his coat, cutting holes over eyes, nose and mouth to enable him to see and breathe."

3: Rasmussen--46 [2] (c. 1923) 1932 Copper Eskimo
116, 764

"The dead must always be buried with the things by means of which he makes his 'life wandering'. This means his harpoons, hävgut: knives, pitithe: bow, arrows. If among the deceased's weapons there are especially valuable objects they may be substituted by less costly ones. Some implements may also be replaced by miniature imitations carved in wood. The clothing of the dead is usually laid beside the ilofra, and, in addition to the objects mentioned, miniature sledges and kayaks as well, and often a whole cross-slat of a sledge, in order that the soul may have a supply of wood.

Real articles such as ulos or cooking pots are never laid by a woman's grave, miniatures being used instead. All these grave offerings are called ilijät: that which is far away, and usually they are laid up along a stone and covered with small stones."

3: Rasmussen--46 [4] (c. 1923) 1932 Copper Eskimo
116, 764

"As soon as the body has been placed in position the thongs that bind the aimiha': the 'corpse-skin', are cut. This is done in order that no bonds shall hamper the soul in its movements; the possibility is imagined that there are many souls in a body."

3: Rasmussen--47 (c. 1923) 1932 Copper Eskimo
116, 764

"If the death taboo is not observed the soul becomes an evil spirit.
...those who have had to do with a dead body, must, when their work with the corpse is finished, always drink water when they return to house or tent. It is thought that this prevents the dead man's soul from becoming thirsty."

15: Jenness--540
764

(No date) 1923

Copper Eskimo

"The Copper Eskimos of the present day, like their kinsmen in Hudson Bay, do not cover their dead, but merely leave them on the surface of the ground to the mercy of the elements and beasts of prey...."

Lamps only 2 or 3 inches long were children's toys, often made by themselves while their parents were manufacturing larger vessels. The Copper Eskimo placed on the graves of females these minature lamps, or else genuine vessels of small size, simply because they valued their larger lamps too highly to throw them away, and believed that the dead person could enlarge a miniature to suit its needs. Frequently, perhaps generally, they recovered useful lamps that had been deposited on the graves of relatives a few years earlier. Very rarely did they make a lamp, even a miniature one, for mortuary purposes only; and when they did, it was nearly always a wooden model, because soapstone was procurable only in one or two districts.

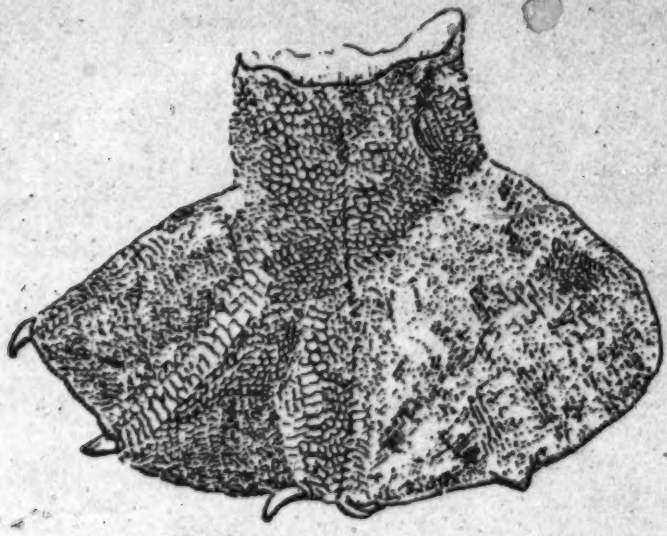

Figure 49. Bag for grass or eriophorum seeds, made from loon's foot. IV.D.334. 1/1.

Most of the cooking was done on lamps not less than 24 inches long. Lamps smaller than this, even down to 5 and 6 inches, served for short journeys, but were not intended primarily for that purpose any more than to be deposited on graves. Rather they were used to dry extra clothes, to give additional light for sewing or working, or to enable a little girl to play at housekeeping in a corner of the hut. Two small lamps laid side by side sometimes took the place of one large lamp for cooking. When these smaller specimens were made of soapstone the shapes were the same, and the workmanship as careful, as in the larger ones. Frequently, however, a family was content to use a water-worn pebble with a saucer-shaped depression, or a naturally hollow slab of limestone or dolomite.

If we exclude the makeshift lamps last mentioned there was really only one kind among the Copper Eskimo, the regular house lamp, of which the smaller specimens, when not mere toys, were generally used for light alone, the larger for both light and heat. Nearly all were made of talc chlorite schist, a soapstone that is soft, of even texture, easily worked with stone or copper tools, and not liable to crack and break under the low heat of the burning blubber.[1]

[1] In their spring tents the Eskimo sometimes rested the lamp directly on two snow blocks and kept them lighted for a considerable time without other effect than the gradual melting of the snow.